DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 169 469 CS 004 574

AUTHOR Kenney, Lawrence M.
TITLE Training Classroom Teachers and Specialists in Reading.
PUB DATE Oct 77
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Reading Association of Ireland (2nd, Dublin, Ireland, October 6-8, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Degree Requirements; *Graduate Study; Higher Education; Masters Degrees; Professional Education; *Reading Instruction; *Teacher Certification; *Teacher Education; *Teacher Education Curriculum

ABSTRACT

Low national reading achievement scores and inadequate academic and certification requirements provide the fundamental rationale for extending and refining regulations concerning the amount of course work required in elementary and secondary education programs. The theoretical and practical reading backgrounds of both prospective and inservice teachers need to be strengthened. Graduate preparation in the field of reading also needs special attention. A model master's degree program includes three options: developing reading specialists for the schools; stengthening the practical skills of elementary teachers, with special emphasis on diagnostic, developmental, and corrective instructional procedures; and helping secondary teachers develop skills to teach reading in the content areas. (TJ)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Lawrence M. Kenney

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED169469

Training Classroom Teachers and Specialists in Reading

Lawrence M. Kenney

Purpose

In the United States, the researcher can easily uncover statistical evidence of poor reading abilities among pupils at all levels. With interests in overall reading achievement whetted some years ago by the publication, Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can Do About It (Harper & Row 1955) numerous studies were instigated that provided statistical data in support of the earlier reached conclusion that Johnny can't read, or at least that he cannot read well.

Amidst the gloom of pupils' achievement scores, today's researcher faces an equally difficult and parallel question in the field of teacher education that is "Is there available a firmly based theoretical-practical plan in preparing teachers for roles in and out of the elementary and secondary school classrooms in the areas of developmental and remedial reading?"

The chief intent of this paper, then, is to describe the needs for strengthening the practitioners' backgrounds in reading for teaching at the elementary and secondary school levels. At the same time, the writer proposes the current graduate reading program at Western Illinois University as a model professional sequence forthose considering to develop a post-university or graduate program for training competent reading specialists.

CS004574

Rationale

The Torch Lighters (Austin et. al. 1961) and The First R (Austin & Morrison et. al. 1963) were early attempts in the sixties to investigate the issues of breadth of prospective teacher preparation in reading. Specifically, the former study opened an investigation to determine how colleges and universities in the U.S. were preparing prospective teachers of reading and to make recommendations for improving that preparation. Based on findings from visits to 74 schools and questionnaire data from 371 schools, the study made 22 recommendations. These dealt with the content and conduct of reading courses as well as other areas of administration and instruction which formed an integral part of the university student's preparatory reading program.

Of their 22 recommendations the following three have particular significance to this paper:

Recommendation 5:

> that class time devoted to reading instruction, whether taught as a separate course or integrated with the language arts, be equivalent to at least three semester hour credits.

Recommendation 6:

> that the basic reading instruction offered to prospective elementary teachers be broadened to include content and instructional techniques appropriate for the intermediate and upper grades.

Recommendation 9:

> that a course in basic reading instruction be required of all prospective secondary school teachers.

A modified follow-up of The Torch Lighters (Austin & Morrison 1977) was initiated in 1974 in an attempt to determine the extent to which the recommendations had been adopted or modified, and to determine what, if any, additional changes had taken place in teacher preparatory programs in recent years.

The questionnaire was mailed to the seventy-four schools participating in the earlier field study of The Torch Lighters, plus an additional 146 colleges and universities selected by their geography. One hundred sixty one of the 220 schools contacted completed the questionnaire. Forty states were represented in the study.

Ninety-five percent of the respondents indicated that Recommendation 5 was in effect. This represents a significant increase over the original study, when only 53 percent of the respondents offered a three semester hour course in reading. About 20 percent, too, indicated that more than three semester hours' credit were required of their prospective elementary school teachers. A majority indicated that six semester hours of reading instruction were required.

About 25 percent of the responding schools indicated that Recommendation 9 had been put into effect. Nearly an additional 15 percent had adopted a modified or strengthened version of this recommendation. The recommendation has not been adopted in any form by about 48 percent of the schools in the study.

In regard to Recommendation 6, nearly 79 percent reported the recommendation in effect and about 18 percent reported that the recommendation had been either strengthened or modified. It seems evident that some balance of emphasis now exists between primary and intermediate emphasis.

On one hand, improved standards for the professional preparation in reading of elementary classroom teachers has, in part, occurred as a result of the minimum standards issued by the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association in 1965. In the main, these guidelines suggested a bachelor's degree, including courses in child development, educational psychology, educational measurement, and children's literature; also, a minimum of six semester hours, or the equivalent, in an accredited reading course or courses.

However, American progress in providing prospective secondary school teachers with professional course work appears far less laudatory. A few years ago, a national survey was conducted among English teachers relative to their responsibilities and training in teaching reading (McGuire 1969). The results of the study revealed that less than one-third had ever had a course in teaching reading.

In another national survey (Piercey & Estes 1972) state certification agencies and that of Washington, D.C. were asked whether they required secondary teachers to be trained in the teaching of reading. Only 4 states, plus Washington, D. C.,

required training in reading for certification of all secondary teachers. An additional 4 states required this training only for some teachers, usually teachers of English. Thirty-five states were not even considering reading as a requirement for secondary certification in English. In The Torch Lighters Revisited (Morrison & Austin 1977) the vast majority of schools sampled did not require prospective secondary school teachers to enroll in a basic reading course. The few schools that did, usually required a course only of English and social science teachers. Secondary teachers as content specialists have received little, and in most instances, no instruction in guiding the reading skills of their students, although it has long been established that wide differences in reading abilities are present on the junior and senior high school levels (Bader 1972).

Among many studies are three that provide some information about the reading achievement of Americans. In one study (Schaie and Roberts, 1970) a standardized word recognition test was administered to over 7,000 children aged 6 to 11 who were representative of our school population. The data indicated that 35 percent of the 10-year-olds and 25 percent of the 11-year-olds correctly recognized as many words as the average 9-year-old. The National Assessment Study (Gadway 1972) examined the trends of the reading knowledges, understandings and skills of approximately 100,000 individuals at four age levels (9, 13, 17, and young adult). Among the findings of

interest were:

1). Nearly half of the 13-year-olds and more than 25 percent of the 17-year-olds were unable to read a passage containing two conflicting statements and arrive at the conclusion that one of them had to be wrong.

2). More than 15 percent of the adults and 17-year-olds, one-third of the 13-year-olds, and nearly two-thirds of the nine-year-olds had difficulty reading and then answering questions about a common daily TV schedule (Justus, 1972).

The Survival Literacy Study (L. Harris and Associates, 1970) attempted to determine how many Americans were prevented by reading deficiencies from filling out application forms for common needs such as a social security number, a personal bank loan, public assistance, Medicaid, and a driver's license. The results indicated that 13 percent or 18.5 million of the adult population failed to complete the forms with fewer than 10 percent errors.

The following newspaper account, representative of what is occurring all too frequently in the U.S., should attest to the justified and grave concern regarding the status of reading achievement in our country:

Poor Reader Sues School System

> San Francisco (Associated Press) An eighteen-year old San Francisco resident, contending he can neither read nor write adequately although he was graduated from a public high school, has asked for more than

> $1 million in a suit against the school system....
> The Supreme Court suit contends that the man's mother was defrauded because she was repeatedly assured by school officials that her son was learning at his proper grade level and needed no remedial nor special training. The suit said that "Peter Doe" completed 12 years of public education in San Francisco's Public School System with a reading ability of the average fifth grade student...
>
> Since leaving San Francisco's Galileo High School, the youth has demonstrated that he can be educated and private tutoring has begun to overcome the deficiency. The suit asks for an award of $500,000 general damages, $500,000 punitive damage and the cost of a private tutor. (Los Angeles Times, Nov. 23, 1972)

It seems apparent that those responsible for reading instruction at the secondary school level in English and other content areas should dismiss often heard misconceptions that elementary schools can prepare all youngsters in reading for entry to secondary schools and, furthermore, that the main task of the secondary teacher is that of teaching the content of his/her discipline.

Proposal

Of all of the deficiencies of educational skills that can exist in a person, perhaps deficiencies in the area of reading are those that have the greatest impact upon the lives of those who are plagued with them, for it is well known that if an intelligent person has not developed high level reading skills, he probably cannot progress satisfactorily through a program of formal education, regardless of the richness of his mental endowment.

Why some students fail to learn to read adequately in

a regular classroom situation is still somewhat of a mystery, for the correlates of reading failure are many. Unfortunately, the mere knowledge that a person has a reading problem is not an adequate basis upon which to structure a sound program of treatment for the person afflicted. The types of reading problems that he has must be determined and ascertainment of related deficiencies, if they exist, must be accomplished before a meaningful program can be recommended.

Authorities in the field of reading have noticed over the years, however, that a person who cannot learn to read well in a classroom setting often can overcome many of his deficiencies if he is instructed on an individual or small group basis, providing that the instruction that he receives is sound, well-planned and presented meaningfully by a patient teacher who understands the nature of reading disability.

It is the opinion of the writer that the state of Illinois and several other states as well, contribute to the disgrace and mediocrity of national reading achievement by permitting university students to graduate from teacher preparatory curriculi in secondary education, for example, without having required a basic reading course of them. While the state of Illinois does require some reading methodology of prospective elementary teachers, simply two semester hours are sufficient for obtaining an elementary school teaching certificate. Fortunately, at institutions within Illinois such as his own, Western Illinois University, academic

requirements for graduating teachers exceed the deplorable minimum state requirements. Consequently, Western Illinois University requires three courses in reading (equivalent of nine semester hours) of elementary education students and one course in basic reading (equivalent of three semester hours) of English education students prior to graduation.

Both state education departments among the states and universities throughout the country vary widely over their reading requirements of prospective teachers. Granted the range from no requirements at all to two to three courses, the secondary teacher-to-be usually fares less in the amount of preparation required in reading.

In the absence of certification standards for reading specialists, the International Reading Association has also issued a document defining the role of the special teacher of reading as well as his/her responsibilities and qualifications. This reading specialist, defined by IRA as the special teacher of reading, has major responsibility for remedial and corrective and/or developmental reading instruction.

The following responsibilities are listed by IRA for the special teacher of reading:

1. should identify students needing diagnosis and/or remediation.
2. should plan a program of remediation from data gathered through diagnosis.
3. should implement such a program of remediation.

4. should evaluate student progress in remediation.
5. should interpret student needs and progress in remediation to the classroom teacher and the parents.
6. should plan and implement a developmental or advanced program as necessary.

Without certification, there are too many unqualified persons attempting both diagnostic and instructional tasks which only a trained reading specialist should undertake. A specific means of preventing such occurrences is through the enforcement of minimum standards for the professional training of reading specialists. The demand for trained personnel in reading is high, but the supply is relatively low. Therefore, the Department of Reading at Western Illinois University prepares individuals in the Special Teacher of Reading option to serve as reading specialists in the schools.

The following IRA guidelines were used in developing a graduate degree program (Master of Science in Education) in reading at Western Illinois University:

1. the completion of a minimum of three years of successful teaching in which the teaching of reading is an important responsibility of the position.
2. the completion of a planned program for the master's degree from an accredited institution, to include:

a. a minimum of 12 semester hours or the equivalent in graduate level reading courses with at least one course in each of the following:

   1. Foundations or survey of reading. A basic course whose content is related exclusively to reading instruction or the psychology of reading. Such a course ordinarily would be first in a sequence of reading courses.
   2. Diagnosis and correction of reading disabilities. The content of this course or courses includes the following: causes of reading disabilities; observation and interview procedures; diagnostic instruments; standardized and informal tests; report writing; materials and methods of instruction.
   3. Clinical or laboratory practicum in reading. A clinical or laboratory experience which might be an integral part of a course or courses in the diagnosis and correction of reading disabilities. Students diagnose and treat reading disability cases under supervision.

b. the completion of study in each of the following areas:

   1. measurement and/or evaluation.

2. child and/or adolescent psychology.
3. psychology, including such aspects as personality, cognition, and learning behaviors.
4. literature for children and/or adolescents.

c. the remainder of the program should be completed from related areas of study.

In considering these guidelines, the Department of Reading developed a special teacher of reading curriculum to prepare reading specialists for the schools, emphasizing individual diagnostic and remedial reading procedures. Three years of prior teaching experience are required for entry.

The required core of reading courses are these:

Reading 570, Foundations of Reading Instruction(4)
Reading 571, Remedial Reading in the Elementary School(3)
Reading 573, Practicum in the Diagnosis of Reading Disabilities(4)
Reading 574, Practicum in the Treatment of Reading Disabilities(4)
Reading 575, Seminar in Reading Research(3)
Reading 580, Reading in Content Areas(3)

(21)

In addition to these courses a graduate core of courses is required. The graduate core consists of three courses from the Departments of Educational Foundations and Educational Administration. Educational Foundations 500, Methods of Research, is required of all candidates. In addition, two courses are selected from the following:

Ed.Fd. 501, Philosophy of Education or Ed.Fd. 585, History of American Education
Ed.Fd. 502, Advanced Educational Psychology or Ed.Fd. 587, Advanced Child Growth and Development
Ed.Fd. 503, Educational Statistics (required of students taking the Special Teacher of Reading Option)
Ed.Ad. 571, Principles of Curriculum Planning or Ed.Ad. 560, Supervision of Instruction

(9)

The program also affords the opportunity for students to elect additional courses in various academic disciplines to bring their total number of hours to 45.

A newer degree option, The Elementary Classroom Teacher of Reading, was developed to strengthen the practical skills of teachers for use in the typical elementary classroom setting. The emphasis in this graduate program is on group diagnostic techniques and developmental and corrective instructional procedures to be used within the classroom.

The required core of reading courses are these:

Reading 570, Foundations of Reading Instruction(4)
Reading 575, Seminar in Reading Research(3) or El.Ed. 567, Teaching Language Arts in Elementary School(3)
Reading 577, Corrective Reading in the Elementary Classroom(3)
Reading 578, Practicum in Evaluating Reading in the Classroom(4)
Reading 579, Practicum in the Teaching of Reading in the Classroom(4)
Reading 580, Reading in Content Areas(3) or English 535, Advanced Children's Literature(4)

(21 or 22)

The graduate core and elective courses would also pertain to this degree option.

The third and fastest growing degree option is the Secondary Teacher of Reading. This secondary option has greatly expanded to accommodate those individuals desirous of teaching reading skills in the content areas and in special laboratory situations. Teachers with baccalaureate degrees in academic fields such as English and social studies frequently find this option in reading attractive. The secondary teacher option emphasizes diagnostic and instructional procedures to be used with remedial, developmental or corrective classes at the junior and senior high school levels or the college and adult levels.

The required core of reading courses are these:

Reading 570, Foundations of Reading Instruction(4)
Reading 572, Reading Problems in High School and College(3)
Reading 575, Seminar in Reading Research(3)
Reading 578, Practicum in Evaluating Reading in the Classroom(4)
Reading 579, Practicum in the Teaching of Reading in the Classroom(4)
Reading 580, Reading in the Content Areas(3)

The graduate core and elective courses would also pertain to this secondary degree option.

The introductory survey course, Foundations of Reading Instruction, is a required theory course of all majors in reading. Second-level courses in each option are theory courses; some elective courses in reading are also theoretical in nature and scope. The required practica, however, provide

field experiences appropriate to the degree option in which the student is enrolled.

At least three courses in each option require participation in the regional public schools. For example, the two required practica in each option of the degree program are offered during the school year and in the summer session. In these testing and teaching practica, graduate students diagnose students' reading problems, instruct the students and write comprehensive evaluative reports of their work for submittal to the instructor of the course. All required laboratory work in the Department of Reading is directed and supervised by doctoral faculty.

For the students enrolled in the special teacher of reading program, the clinical practica provide field experiences in both testing and teaching in the public schools. The practicum in testing provides a supervised experience in the administration of formal and informal diagnostic instruments. The results obtained in individual testing sessions are summarized in formal case reports. Each graduate reading major devotes from 50 to 75 clock hours to this diagnostic activity in a particular term. In addition, the practicum in teaching provides a supervised experience in teaching an individual student in a clinical setting. The progress noted in instruction is summarized in written case reports. Each graduate reading major devotes from 50 to 75 clock hours to this instructional activity in a particular term.

For students enrolled in the other two degree options, their classroom practica provide field experiences in both testing and teaching in the public schools. The practicum in testing here provides a supervised experience for identifying students who require corrective help in the classroom and for determining the nature of the help. Group and individual tests are administered and interpreted. Detailed reports containing recommendations are written. Each graduate reading major devotes from 50 to 75 clock hours to this instructional activity in a particular term. In addition, the practicum in teaching provides a supervised experience in employing instructional strategies for teaching corrective reading in the classroom. Activities include organizing the classroom for reading, prescribing and implementing corrective procedures, and assessing and reporting student progress. Each graduate reading major devotes from 50 to 75 clock hours to this instructional activity in a particular term.

The reading majors have opportunities to observe and participate in pre-practica situations in the Reading Center, College Reading Skills Laboratory and in regional public schools. The College Reading Skills Laboratory is an instructional area for the reading improvement and acceleration programs serving undergraduates. The Reading Center, however, is a diagnostic and treatment center serving referrals from the region, both children and adults. Classroom experiences are available in nearby public schools.

The practica afford opportunities for the instructor and students themselves to evaluate diagnostic and instructional activities, seminar presentations and discussions, critiques of demonstration lessons and other oral and written reports. The instructor evaluates lesson plans daily and encourages self-criticism among enrollees. A rating scale is typically employed by the instructor for judging the actual teaching effectiveness of practicum students.

The Department of Reading maintains a course outline of each course presented by the Department. Each course outline contains a course description, the required textbook(s), course objectives, topical outline of course content, specific diagnostic/instructional materials employed, typical course requirements provided by instructors teaching the course and a list of evaluation procedures. The theoretical courses as well as the required practica specify paper-pencil tests and projects as requirements for grading purposes.

Upon entry and throughout the graduate reading program, the master's degree candidate will be evaluated in terms of competencies in dealing with children, peers, faculty, content, materials and activities. Rating scales are also used in the reading practica to indicate to the student his/her particular strengths and weaknesses among the expected behaviors as well as a part of the overall evaluation.

Summary

Whether or not the states continue to lag in their demands for teacher certification programs, colleges and universities offering teacher education curriculi must exercise their freedom in developing and requiring utilitarian courses for prospective elementary and secondary teachers and model graduate programs for those individuals desiring a specialized role in reading. Hopefully, such new developments in teacher education would have unlimited impact upon the literacy effort in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

The ultimate goal of a graduate reading program should be to provide opportunities for graduate students to develop competencies, knowledge and attitudes necessary to successfully modify the reading behavior of students (Dauzat 1971). It is felt that the Western Illinois University graduate reading program fulfills this noble aim. The program blends theory and practice while specifying knowledge to be acquired, developing positive professional and ethical attitudes, and requiring specific instructional tasks to be accomplished with pupils at all educational levels.

REFERENCES

Austin, M. et. al. The torch lighters: tomorrow's teachers of reading. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.

Austin, M. & Morrison, C. The first R: the Harvard report on reading in elementary schools. New York: Macmillan, 1963.

Bader, L. Preparing future secondary teachers in reading. Journal of Reading, 1972, 15, pp. 492-495.

Flesch, R. Why Johnny can't read and what you can do about it. New York: Harper & Row, 1955.

Gadway, C. National assessment of educational progress. Reading: Summary. Preliminary report 02-R-00. Denver: Education Commission of the States, May 1972.

Harris, L. & Assoc. Survival literacy study. Congressional Record, November 18, 1970. Pp. E 9719-E9723.

Justus, H. Status report on reading. American Education, August-September 1972, 8, 9-13.

Los Angeles Times, "Poor Reader Sues School System," November 23, 1972, p. 23.

McGuire, G. "The Tching. of Reading by English Tchrs: A Nat'l. Survey" Interim report of the Illinois State-Wide Curriculum Study Center in the Prep. of Sec. Schl. Eng. Teachers (USOE Proj. No. HE-145; USOE Contract No. OE-5-10-029; ISCPET Subcontract No. SS 17-15-69) June 1969.

Morrison, C. & Austin, M. The torch lighters revisited. Newark, Del.: IRA, 1977.

Piercey, D. & Estes T. Secondary reading requirements: report on the states. Journal of Reading, 1973, 17, 20-24.

Schaie, K. & Roberts, J. School achievement of children 6-11 years: as measured by the reading and arithmetic subtests of the Wide Range Achievement Test. U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Public Health Service Publication No. 1000--Series II--No. 103, June 1970.

Abstract

Training Classroom Teachers and Specialists in Reading

The writer describes the needs for strengthening the theoretical and practical reading backgrounds of both prospective and in-service teachers for their teaching responsibilities at the elementary and secondary school levels. Graduate preparation in the field of reading receives major attention, particularly the cited master's degree program conducted at his own university, Western Illinois.

Low national reading achievement scores and inadequate academic and certification requirements provide the fundamental rationale for extending and refining regulations over the amount of course work required in elementary and secondary teacher education programs.